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BY

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A rosy-cheeked little fellow was standing out of doors in the pouring rain, dripping wet, but radiantly happy, because over his head he held an old umbrella that he had found. The handle was broken, the ribs were bent, and through great slits in the top the rain poured down in streams; but the lad laughed for joy as he said proudly: "A 'breller 's a 'breller, if it does be broke!"

So we say: "A boy is a boy, if he does have straight black hair, yellow skin, and strange-shaped eyes; and if he does wear queer clothes and speak a queer language." And as little Ka-ta-da, though a native Alaskan, was a real boy, we expect that he will be interesting to other boys. If they could have seen him at his favorite occupations, wading in water up to his shoulders or paddling about in the family

canoe, they would surely have a fellow-feeling for him.

Ka-ta-da does not remember very distinctly his early home with his father and mother. When he was five years old his mother's brother took a fancy to him. This man had no son, and hoped that after his death Ka-ta-da would marry his wife and so inherit her property and keep up the family name. This seems very strange to us; but to Ka-ta-da's parents it was a familiar custom, and they were well satisfied with such a prospect for their son. Ka-ta-da was not consulted in the matter. He set off with his uncle, pleased and excited with the thought of change, but with a feeling far down in his heart that before long he would be wishing himself back with his father and mother.

Ka-ta-da's new home was a low, wooden structure, perhaps thirty feet square, built on the beach, but far enough back to escape the high tide. It had neither chimney nor windows; a hole in the roof served to let out the smoke, and there was a small door

for entrance, opening inside upon a platform extending around the four sides of the house. Here were rolls of blankets, stores of provisions, etc. From the platform a few steps led down to the large living room with a fire in the center. In this room lived not only Ka-ta-da's uncle and aunt, but one or two other families; so the lad was not likely to lack company.

Ka-ta-da's first friends, however, were the dogs, of which his uncle had a great number. He soon learned to call them all by their names, and to shout, "Ha-goo!" (Come here), or "Chuk!" (Get away). In fact, the boy was at first more fond of the dogs than of their master. His uncle meant to be kind, but he had well-defined ideas as to the training of his little nephew, and Ka-ta-da thought the process very severe. He was to grow up hardy and brave; so every morning he must bathe in the ocean, the colder the better. Then his uncle brushed him from head to foot with a bundle of small switches. During all this time the boy must not cry out or give

a sign of pain. That would be cowardice, and would give his people shame. Very glad was Ka-ta-da when this morning exercise was over. Then he could run about on the beach with other children and watch the ravens and sea-gulls that gathered there in large numbers looking for food. What fun it was to chase them and see them fly away in fright! Ka-ta-da did not like the ravens very well—they kept up such a doleful croaking all the time. One day, however, a raven played such a clever trick that the lad had a respect for the birds ever after. A pig was poking around on the beach digging for clams in the sand. A raven grabbed the clam and flew away; then from his high position he dropped the clam on a stone and came down to eat it from the broken shell. Ka-ta-da thought this so very funny that he forgot his fear of his uncle and ran home to tell him about the cunning bird.

In the spring came a new experience. It was the time for going out sealing, and Ka-ta-da was to accompany his uncle's

party. This was great fun for the small boy and helped to drive away any lingering pangs of homesickness. Of course he took an active part in all the preparation. First the long canoe must be put in order. It had been shaped on the outside first from one solid log of a big tree, then hollowed out on the inside by chiseling and burning with hot stones. In it were stored provisions for several months. Dried fish, pressed seaweed and hard tack could be pressed into small compass; there was room, also, for the big can of oolican oil, which forms so large a part of an Alaskan bill of fare.

All was in readiness at last and the sealing party set out, sailing (or rather paddling) for several days before reaching the sealing grounds. Here they camped for a month or two while the men hunted seal —not the fur seal that gives us our sealskin caps and jackets, but the hair seal, far more useful to Ka-ta-da and his friends. The skins would furnish them boots or a boat, ropes or fish nets, a case for their

goods or a can for oil. The oil itself could be made from the blubber (fat), and the flesh, salted like pork, would be excellent food—for an Alaskan.

You may be sure, therefore, that Ka-ta-da took a keen interest in each day's hunting, and rejoiced at the number of skins that fell to his uncle's share. Those intended for kiaks (boats) were first dried, then scraped and soaked in oil; others were cut round and round in strips for ropes and fish nets.

When the sealing party returned there were many skins to be sold. After that a fishing expedition brought more interesting experiences to Ka-ta-da; and then it was time to settle down for the long, dark winter. They were not so far north that the sun left them altogether, but by December they would be much of the time in darkness, and Ka-ta-da must spend many hours in the cellar-like house, that to us would have seemed not fit to live in. The child was not given to complaining, however, and as he knew of nothing better he

was prepared to make himself comfortable in his winter quarters. He found that the dark hours need not be idle ones. By the light of the lamp he learned to carve in wood and stone, and as in one winter after another his fingers gained in strength and skill, many a well-shaped paddle or canoe gave proof of his good workmanship.

So the seasons passed until Ka-ta-da called himself a big boy. He had learned a few useful things, but was ignorant of much that American children have known from their earliest years. He could have told you about devil-worship and witchcraft, but knew nothing of God's love or our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A few people from the States came, now and then, to the village where he lived, and now a "Boston" teacher (so the Alaskans phrased it) was to open a school. Ka-ta-da was one of the first pupils. Very slow was his progress in learning the English words that seemed so queer, and very hard did he find it to be prompt and regular. Sometimes his teacher had to go to

the house and wake him up. He would dress as quickly as a native can, rub his hands over his hair, and with a piece of dried fish in his hand, start for school, eating his breakfast by the way.

It was in this school that "the light of the knowledge of God" first dawned for Ka-ta-da. Here, too, he learned of the Training School at Sitka, where one could learn to work with both brain and hands. This was the place for him, he felt sure; and though there were some difficulties in the way, how glad he is now that he was persevering enough to overcome them!

Although he knew it not, Ka-ta-da was leaving his uncle's home forever. He spent three happy years in the Sitka School, and learned there to be a good carpenter; then he went out to work for himself, under the English name that he had taken when he entered the Training School. But now the boy must face a question whose answer would affect his whole life. His uncle had died, and the people of his tribe insisted that Ka-ta-da was under obligation to

marry the widow according to the arrangement made so many years before. To do as his uncle's family wished would be like going back to heathenism; but to refuse would bring upon him the contempt of his tribe and would cut him off from every association of his early days. How should he decide?

Ka-ta-da chose the latter course and gave up all claim to his uncle's property. I think he has never regretted his decision. After a time he married one of the Mission girls, whom he had known at the Training School. And so, as this was to be the life of an Alaskan boy, and as Ka-ta-da is a boy no longer, we must bring this story to a close. He now lives in a neat little cottage with his wife and children, and works in the town at his trade. He is still to be seen at the church services. When we look into his face while he sings the beautiful hymns, or offers prayer to "Our Father," we exclaim, "Great is the power of Christian education, marvelous

the change wrought by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all nations and tribes!"

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